



Lame Deer OPI Team - Planning for Improvement March 2011

Think of the change process as a traveling canoe, and your decisions and actions as the paddle. You will get where you are going one stroke at a time with the decisions and actions you make. - DJ Vanas

Transformation News--- John Bole:

As I daily wander the halls of the Lame Deer MS/HS I am challenged by the truth that, "The pathway to educational excellence lies within each school." (Terrance Deal) The opportunity to pursue excellence is first a personal decision then a corporate one. As we endeavor to be a 'School of Promise' it is of vital importance that we each embrace those elements of promise that are within our grasp.

The SIG team remained active during the cold days of February – we met as a full team twice, in smaller units several other times. Robert Simpson and I had nearly daily conversations about the potential we see in the school.

The following items were the major points of work:

1. District Action Plan – Timeline
2. Tutoring Handbook
3. CRT Protocol
4. Parent Meeting with Gear-up
5. MBI/Discovery Discussion
6. Monthly Schedule for Wed. Staff Meetings
7. Data Discussions
8. Alt Team Meeting
9. Technology Related

Transformation News--- Jo Swain: John Bole, the new Transformational Leader for the Lame Deer School District, has spent the last four weeks meeting people, learning the ropes, and just trying to get his bearings. I have enjoyed my time working with him to hopefully make this a smooth transition.

February has been a busy month with staff involved in the SOPPAS teacher evaluation process, preparing for the state MontCAS assessments, and staff development. The National Native Trauma Center from the University of Montana spent Wednesday

afternoon, February 16 with all Lame Deer staff to share great information about stress and trauma not only in children but also in adults. We look forward to their return visit in March to provide additional information on this all-important topic.

School Board Involvement --- Nancy

Coleman: Congratulations to the board members and administrators who participated in a training retreat in conjunction with the school board from Lodge Grass. The day was filled with lots of information on legal issues and other current topics of concern. Material from that meeting was shared with members that could not make the meeting at the last board meeting. The event was well received and future events are planned with both boards as well as the board from Pryor and possibly including the Frazer board via ITV. We hope to get some dates to begin the planning for the next 'retreat'.

A follow up on the last meeting was facilitated by me and a written summary of that information was sent to the board chair, superintendent and the clerk. I hope the information was timely and useful to this board.

School Community News – Robert

Simpson: February has been a really busy month! We began our Lame Deer home visit program this month, and we are all really excited about the reception we've gotten so far from parents and families. We are beginning to identify some parents that will be instrumental in helping develop a PTA, to help increase direct communication between parents and teachers and further our community support for our school. We welcome any interested parents and family members to be a part of the PTA. So far, we are focusing our home visits on the seniors, and we will eventually work our way back to the freshmen. This focus on seniors first

John Bole, jbole@mt.gov

Robert Simpson, rsimpson@mt.gov

Nancy Coleman, ncoleman@mt.gov

Jo Swain, jswain@mt.gov

Phone: 406-438-5675 Cell

Phone: 406-465-1639 Cell

Phone: 406-444-3551 Office

Phone: 406-656-8698 Cell

was at the request of our School Board Chair, and we were happy to accommodate her request because we really appreciate the support we've gotten from the School Board so far this year.

In February, we also began working with the newly created Rodeo Club at the High School. Having a local high school rodeo club can help by fostering participation in Montana high school rodeos. Some of you may ask, how will this help our students do better in school? Well, in order to participate in high school rodeos, students must achieve a minimum C grade point average. Participation in high school rodeos is incentive-based - if they don't do their school work, meet their minimum grade requirement, and avoid absences and tardiness, they can't participate. In fact, membership in the Montana High School Rodeo Association requires submission of an official school transcript verifying their grades are high enough. We are really excited about working with the students to help make the Rodeo Club a permanent part of the Lame Deer High School.

I have also been meeting almost daily with various students from the high school, and they have been giving me lots of ideas of what incentives might actually work, what really matters to them and would actually influence them to have better attendance or get better grades. I am really excited to continue these conversations with the students and work with the entire SIG team to develop a strong incentive program for the rest of this year, but especially to begin first thing in the fall for next year.

From the Helena Office -- Nancy Coleman, SIG Unit Director:

Grant Requirements for March and April:

For the board's information we are providing a listing of things that need to be accomplished at various levels. Much of the work is a continuation from the previous month:

For the on-site OPI employees:

- Support the state tests which are slated for March;

John Bole, jbole@mt.gov

Robert Simpson, rsimpson@mt.gov

Nancy Coleman, ncoleman@mt.gov

Jo Swain, jswain@mt.gov

- Utilize the checklist developed to ensure the processes required for SOPPAS are followed;
- Begin to gather tools to help staff develop a process to revise and update class schedules, the school calendar and various handbooks for the districts which will include community and student involvement in this process;
- Continue to work to foster shared leadership in the implementation of the District Action Plan (DAP) bringing all voices to the table;
- Continue work with SIG District Leadership Team (DLT) to establish processes and procedures to monitor and implement the DAP details;
- Continue to assist with organizing the collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs);
- Continue to support actions steps within the Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI);
- Begin to work with local staff to determine a protocol for scheduled external professional development providers; and
- Continue to provide job embedded professional development through training and coaching for all staff.

For the Principal:

- Develop and implement an evaluation schedule for the 3rd party evaluator;
- Assume the required role as established by the SOPPAS evaluation process;
- Monitor the assessment plan – protocol developed and plan discussions with staff and students on how to improve the process for next year;
- Continue to attend School Improvement Team meeting(s); coordinate professional development of the PLCs which should include calendars – teaching/class schedules and handbook revisions for board review by April;
- Continue to lead, along with the MBI facilitator, action steps within the MBI;

Phone: 406-438-5675 Cell

Phone: 406-465-1639 Cell

Phone: 406-444-3551 Office

Phone: 406-656-8698 Cell

- Continue to assess progress on the work of SIG DLT to start planning for next year;
- Continue to monitor a system to determine 'at risk' students based on – attendance, past class grades, discipline, support systems for success (student information system); and
- Put a plan in place that will accurately gather the required reporting data for grant compliance.

For the District/Superintendent:

- Begin the evaluation process for principals through the SOPPAS process;
- Continue to support the implementation of the DAP through resources, etc.; and
- Continue to participate in the finance calls that are provided by the OPI once a month.

For teachers:

- Actively participate in the SOPPAS evaluation process;
- Actively participate in the collaborative PLCs;
- Continue to plan and implement lesson plans that include standards alignment with ongoing assessments;
- Continue to implement the programs for communication arts and mathematics with fidelity; and
- Continue to actively participate in school improvement teams which you are involved with.

Nancy Coleman, ncoleman@mt.gov, Phone: 444-3551 Cell: 438-1942

Statewide Youth and Community

Outreach – *Don Wetzel, Jr.*: This month the schools made great strides in implementing youth initiatives that included afterschool programs and clubs. Rodeo, drama and poetry clubs have been developed and student lounges are becoming a reality in our schools with support coming from parents, teachers and school boards. These incentive-driven programs will provide positive rewards for youth that improve attendance and grades. I was able to sit down and visit with many teachers and staff

members at each of our SIG schools and explain our community and youth-driven work and to also discuss ways to improve our communications around the youth. It is exciting to have these discussions!

The CLs big focus for this first year has been to develop relationships with the Youth, Elders (Culture), Community programs, and Parents and Families. This is a long process, but it is exciting to see how it has progressed at each of our SIG schools. Culture and identity are brought up often when discussing our plans for the community and schools. We have the privilege to work with the strongest and most resilient Tribal Nations in these schools and want to bring those historic strengths to the forefront and help in developing success.

In two of our schools we have began the Home Visiting Project (<http://www.pthvp.org/>) that is bringing great benefits to parents and the school. Schools staff are invited by the community liaisons to make visits to parents with the first visit focused on simply the hopes and dreams of our students. Let's continue this positive trend and work together to keep all of our students' hopes and dreams at the center of our work.

Donnie Wetzel, dwetzel2@mt.gov, Phone: 281-5092 Cell: 438-1733

John Bole, jbole@mt.gov
 Robert Simpson, rsimpson@mt.gov
 Nancy Coleman, ncoleman@mt.gov
 Jo Swain, jswain@mt.gov

Phone: 406-438-5675 Cell
 Phone: 406-465-1639 Cell
 Phone: 406-444-3551 Office
 Phone: 406-656-8698 Cell